

perpetuating the opioid epidemic, fueling a cycle of violence, and abusing innocent civilians, they are growing richer and richer by the minute.

Targeting these organizations means more than stopping the flow of drugs into our country; it means ending a cycle of crime and violence and working together with Mexico and Central American countries to help them escape the savage grip of these criminal organizations.

Additionally, we need to strengthen security cooperation with our international partners so that they are able to more effectively fight side by side with us. Mexico and Central and South American nations often lack the ability to adequately counter the trafficking occurring within their borders, and corruption serves as a major roadblock in efforts to stop criminal activity.

There are a number of programs in place already—many of which began through the Merida Initiative—which have yielded positive results, but we need to look at all of these and make sure we understand what works and what does not work so we can justify the expenditure of U.S. taxpayer dollars in this fight. By strengthening and expanding these operations, we can help our southern neighbors fight drugs, crime, and corruption within their own borders, which would more effectively reduce the flow of drugs and other illicit goods moving across our southern border.

Finally, if we want any of these efforts to be sustainable, we can't just focus on law and order; we must look at ways to invest in economic development to help these countries build stronger economies. These are beautiful, vibrant countries that are also victims of endemic crime in the region. Helping them promote economic security will carry immense benefits for the entire region, and it is something we need to discuss more in the coming months.

Senator FEINSTEIN and I have worked together in the past on legislation to address the drug epidemic, such as the Substance Abuse Prevention Act, which is now the law of the land. This Congress, we will continue our important work together on the International Narcotics Control Caucus. I look forward to hearing from our distinguished witnesses this afternoon and engaging in a larger discussion—hopefully a nationwide discussion—about how we can reverse the devastation caused by the opioid crisis and drug overdoses in America.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CRUZ). The clerk will call the roll. The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. I ask unanimous consent that the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:30 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mrs. CAPITO).

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

FOREIGN AGENTS DISCLOSURE AND REGISTRATION ENHANCEMENT ACT

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, for nearly 2 years Special Counsel Mueller's investigation captivated Washington. Most of the media reporting focused on speculation and false allegations of a criminal conspiracy between the Trump campaign and the Kremlin. This reporting was fueled by critics eager to all but guarantee the President's guilt. After a very exhaustive investigation—and, of course, millions and millions of taxpayer dollars being spent by the Mueller investigation—many of those same critics still can't accept that Mueller and his investigative team of Democratic donors found no collusion or crime.

The continuing political noise over the last 2 years, however, risks drowning out critical siren warnings of another real threat—self-interested and surreptitious foreign influence in our political discourse. Mueller's team indicted dozens of Russians for a scheme to sow discord in American politics through our social media and the release of hacked emails. However, not enough attention has been paid to foreign interests secretly enlisting American cutouts to directly influence our laws, our public policies, and, most importantly, public opinion to destroy our social cohesion.

This is a very serious problem that should send shivers down the spine of anyone in government who meets with lobbyists. If lobbyists or public relations firms are pushing policy preferences at the behest of foreign powers and foreign interests, we ought to know about it.

This week I introduced legislation to strengthen and also fine-tune enforcement authorities to better expose clandestine foreign influence campaigns. My bipartisan bill, the Foreign Agents Disclosure and Registration Enhancement Act, will encourage greater compliance with a very often ignored requirement for lobbyists working on behalf of foreign entities to tell the U.S. people who they are working for. It accomplishes this by creating critical updates to one of our Nation's oldest lobbying disclosure laws.

Way back in 1938, Congress first passed a bill to accomplish a way to expose this foreign influence in America, particularly within our government. That bill passed in 1938 is called the Foreign Agents Registration Act. The bill was meant to unmask Nazi propa-

ganda and identify foreign attempts to influence Congress and the American public. Until recently, however, this Foreign Agents Registration Act has been seldom used.

Now—get this—only 15 violators of this act have been criminally prosecuted since 1966, and 1966 was the date when this law was last updated. Of course, now I am trying to update it again. About half of these prosecutions, of the 15, stem from the work of Special Counsel Mueller's investigation, though that is not due to the lack of foreign influence efforts to affect our Federal decision making.

As part of my oversight efforts, I first raised concerns about the shoddy Foreign Agent Registration Act enforcement in 2015. Now, I did this before Donald Trump launched his Presidential campaign. I did it when a former Clinton White House staffer and a lawyer for a Georgian political party failed to register as foreign agents.

I also raised concerns about work for Ukrainians by Paul Manafort and the Podesta Group, and about reports that the Democratic National Committee worked with Ukraine to undermine the Trump campaign. I raised concerns when the firm behind the discredited Steele dossier failed to register for its lobbying work to repeal U.S. sanctions against Russia.

Now, as it turned out, that is the same lobbying effort that was behind the bait and switch at the Trump Tower in June of 2016. I don't have to go into details about that Trump Tower meeting. That is a very famous and well documented meeting.

I even subpoenaed Manafort to testify at the Judiciary Committee hearing on lax Foreign Agents Registration Act enforcement, and I praised Mueller for dusting off the law that had been ignored by lobbyists and prosecutors for so long because they really didn't want the American public to know that they were working for a foreign country.

Now, that may sound like that is something illegal. What is illegal is that you don't tell the American people whom you are working for. It is not, as far as I know, illegal to work for the interests of another country, as they might have some legitimate interest in our policymaking, but the point is that the public ought to know whom they are working for.

Now, I talked about subpoenaing Manafort, and in the end Manafort, his colleague Rick Gates, and former Obama White House Counsel Greg Craig were among those indicted for violating this Foreign Agents Registration Act.

My Foreign Agents Registration Act oversight activities have been done without regard to power, party, or privilege. I happen to have a reputation as an equal-opportunity overseer to see that the laws are faithfully enforced, and I believe that this very act of registration of foreign agents ought to be better enforced and enforced equally.